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CANSADO!

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CANSADO!

Love is the essence of all fashioned life.
Death is an atrophy of famish'd love.
Delve deep down to the hidden roots of things,
Pierce thro' the armor of God's mystic plan,
View all the subtle sources of what is,
Wrest from the keeper of it Nature's key,
Unlock the secrets of all-ambient being—
The sum of all thy booty will be love:
Life, here and in the sealed hereafter—love;
Death, now and in the dread unknown—its absence.

WASHINGTON, D. C.

1877.

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As a slight
expression of his grat-
itude for a friendship to which,
more than to any other cause, he is in-
debted for the due measure of his success in
life, through the timely bestowal of fraternal aid and
counsel in the extremities of "outrageous
fortune," the author most affection-
ately inscribes these first
falterings of his
Muse to
General Rutherford B. Hayes.

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THE POET.

The Sierra Madre Mountains. Time, Evening.

A young Poet standing upon a lofty Peak, alone. After gazing longingly into the East for a time, he turns his face toward the West, all aflame with the descending Sun, and thus soliloquizes:

I fain would sing some idyl of low note
Would lull the singer and whoso shall list—
Some "Gentle Elia's" lay in votive verse—
But thou, inexorable Muse, impell'st me fro't,
Sweet tyrant!

Lo, mine eye doth peer afar
Thro' fancy's silvery mists: I see rude storms
Sweep o'er the pampas of perturbèd souls;
I see mirages, and pale beckoning forms—
Eidolons of the heart; I see the waves
Of passion curling round their helmless lives,
Borne ever onward by the winds of fate;
I view them break on black basaltic reefs
Of scorn and envy, wreck'd; I hear each spar
Send up a separate love-enanguish'd cry.
O sweet Parnassian, pity!

Ah, how vain!
Last night I knelt me on the tawny sands,
The salt surf raining from me, and there pray'd
A prayer for surcease of my waking dreams—
My waking and my sleeping dreams of them.
But while I knelt an unrest seized the Sea.
That heaped the waters height on height, and hurled
Them 'gainst the trembling shore, till tempest-stunn'd
It lay quiescent, bruised and imbecile.
And loud from out the storm a voice came up,
Or mighty whisper, as some Titaness
Wrapt in its toils and spent were gasping griefs
High Jove were impotent to heart in her—
Came up and bade me sing men's sorrows. Once
I rode where human lives fell thick as leaves
In autumn time—where war's red samiel swept
A hemisphere, and stripp'd proud nations bare,
That I might glean some instants of surcease;
But ever so more loud than war's wild shock
The voice pierced thro' the fury, crying. Sing!
Afar from teeming highways, where new worlds
Fresh-fashioned from God's hand lay hush-inisled,
I builded me a cot by Balboa's Sea,
And deemed oblivion would infold me there:
O brief reprieve! the wingèd breezes bore
The message from my Muse still up to me:
Sing, joyless mortal!

Vain—I know how vain!
I leap up startled from my troubled sleep.
My soul the voices of the night perturb.
I hear loud cries wrung out by cruelty,
And piteous passion's unrequited plaint.
Pale forms creep thro' the shadows near to me.
In men's loud midst I walk with spirit shapes,

And dwell in ways enpeopled with wing'd wraiths.
No rest, no peace!

[*A wagoner passes far beneath him, singing a homely rustic song.*

O God! for one brief hour
Of quiet such as you one Thou vouchsaf'st—
One in whose little round of duties done
Doth dwell repletion of a large content.
My brain is scorched with thought, hot blinding thought,
That burns up from my soul. O quench it, Thou
That kindled'st it, or kill me! I would give
Ambition's all to be as this man is,
Tho' dwarf'd of mind, and shut within a scope
Whose limit is but room to house him in,
Wherewith to feed upon, a bed, a wife:
'Tis all, the sum of all, for 'tis content.

[*A pause.*

While other men are patient,
Plodding thro' each day's alloted tasks,
Building the lowly years with little cares
And little duties done, content, I live
An hundred lives in their each drowsy day;
For every passion of the larger world
Without their paltry own me seizes 'pon,
And stamps its image on my heart of hearts.
When other men lie down at night to sleep,
Unhaunted by eidolons, nor perturb'd
Unceasingly by phantoms of unrest,
Consuming thoughts within me ever burn,
And people darkness with their ghostly shapes.

While other men live inly with themselves,
Each living his own separate cycled life,
I live not only my own life but theirs,
And think the thoughts of every sentient brain,
And weep the sorrows of all instinct hearts,
And revel in the joys of every soul:
I have no instant for large quietude,
No leisure for surcease of ample thought.

[*The twilight creeps up the mountain-side. Voices from the mining-camps far below are borne up to him on the cool Pacific breezes. Baring his brow, his yellow curls driven across it like raveled gold, a calm settles upon him, and Hope enters in and sits a while with his spirit, while Sadness sleeps.*

Man, omnipresent man, thou part of God,
Where art thou not upon this circling world!—
Man, my sublimest theme, grand egotist,
Th' imperial-reason'd autocrat of mind,
That holds his tenure by divinest right,
And feels his royalty in lofty thought,
And reads his majesty in high resolve
And aspirations tow'rd the infinite—
That knows himself the king of Nature's all,
The crown of God's accomplished universe!

Time was—far in the forenoon-tide of time—
When men were bullied by the carping priest
To self-abasement, when an upright man,
Instinct with soul and fine intelligence,
Fell prone upon the round earth, even a thing

The slimy worm he liken'd him unto
Was loftier and more worthy. Past that time:
Base anthropomorphism served it well
And worthily; but came a time when man—
I thank God hourly with my might of soul
I lived not in the baser time, but this—
When man was deified up to himself,
A being whom God might not blush to own.

O glorious later time! I sit not down
Dejected in the shadows of the Past,
And mourn the memory of a better. Who,
With chosen speech and set invective, rails
Against the temper of his time, is false
To God, his fellows and himself. Each time,
Each age, each generation is more fine,
More full, more proximate to God's design.

A lofty-imaged soul of this new age
Climbed up the steep where bloom the flow'rs of thought
And pluck'd this bud from off its pendent bough:
"O would that it had been vouchsaf'd to me
To dwell my destined cycle here with men
In man's last generation, finished, full,
Perfected, rounded, when its sons shall step,
Accomplished spirits, to the higher life."

An earthier-fiber'd soul stepp'd lower down
And gleaned this thistle from the weeds of thought:
"O give me back the good old time, when there
Were giants on the earth!—that I had lived
When demigods and heroes ruled the age!"
When demigods and heroes ruled, forsooth!
Who had been hero in that elder age,
Or demigod, or giant, is in ours

Of larger reason and of ampler soul.
O little spirit! in that age thou mourn'st,
Thou hadst been less by just so much as time
Hath ripened man's intelligence, and schooled
Him in humanity to fellow-man.

Turn I not backward? Ay, in retrospect,
As one who husbands should turn ever back,
Nor scan his furrow for its sole defects,
But strive the next time for a perfecter.
Who reads the maxim by the letter errs,
And deems his furrow faultless, and so ne'er
May turn a truer. Turn I ever back,
Mark well the excellences of my thought—
The imperfections view not overmuch—
And toil to temper them with finer touch:
So each year's furrow is a worthier:
So each new age builds better than the last.

O theme of themes, O man! I burn with thee.
Thou fill'st me to repletion, and no space
Is in me for another: emperor
Thou of my spirit and intelligence.
I love thee as ne'er lover loved, revere
God first, thine Origin, then only thee.
And Woman, O supremest man! thou art
My shrine; thou sittest in the inner temple,
The Holy of Holies of my reverence,
And thee I bow down to and worship. Proud
Am I of mine idolatry. Thine image—
Last, best thought of God—is God revealed
In most essential bodiment—in love.
Thou dost idealize the baser man,
And thro' thy wondrous love he doth himself
Idealize, and so thou holdest him

Bound unto nobler action. Thee I name
Crown-jewel of Creation.

[*A pause.*

"Frailty,
Thy name is Woman!" Nay, sweet autocrat,
Divine dictator, sovereign of the realm—
And tyrant we adore—of Literature,
The woman of my time I hail thy schism.
My woman, Shakespeare, is of ampler soul,
Of godlier stature and of purpler heart.
I am an Optimist? Ay, utterly—
In faith in man's high destiny, in trust
In large preponderance of fine earth in him.
In these no fiber of my being, no
Sole element of all I am, but is
Wrought Optimism, warp and weft inwov'n.
I am no Pessimist when man is named.
I claim a balance for the good in him;
Maintaining this, I am an Optimist,
Proud of the title and deserving it.

O I would shape mankind a finer man:
Seek not for evil but for good alway;
When found a virtue, crown it an exalt,
(Or wanting one, "assume it," and so build,)
Praise, honor, magnify, clothe on, complete,
Transmute the iron to fine gold in him,
Assay the presence of no base alloy—
Till conscious of no ill, an atrophy
Would seize on vice, and virtue would prevail.
No beauty else is wrought from negatives—
From what it should *not* be: can man be wrought
By such an art? by holding up to him

Some grotesque effigy—not of himself,
But what he should *not* be, some paragon
Of vice and evil, till inured to it,
(Forgetful of another) he must needs
Grow self-transfigured to the loathsome thing?
Nay, flatter, praise, augment all good in man,
Exaggerate the germ until it seem
Self-ambient, and so choke all evil out.

Ay, even so. Thou canst not harmony
Create of discord, quiet of unrest,
Or joy of sorrow, love of hate. Can good
Come out of evil, right of wrong? Does beauty
Spring from hideousness? A child has caught
Some unclean syllables of sewer-speech,—
How whiten you the stain? by deep'ning it?
By signing o'er and o'er the thing you loathe,
To school his memory to its loathsomeness?
Nay, rather seek oblivion of the thing
With thoughts and signs of beauty, paint the stain
All out with symbols of the beautiful.

The brutal Pessimist has been unthroned.
The glorious age of Optimism dawns—
Our golden new and gentler, kindlier age,
The apotheosis on earth of man by ruth.
Hail, happy age! hail twilight-time, all hail!
Humanity's new day now streaks the East,
Burns thro' the darkness of the elder night,
And gives large promises of future noon.

[*The wind rises; it is a spent storm at sea. The sob-like moans of the dying tempest are borne up to the Poet, low, plaintive, almost human in their an-*

guish. He listens, and the old longing look comes back into his eyes: Hope departs out of his spirit, and Sadness wakes.

Her voice—it calls me!—O how sweet it was—
That quiet instant! But 'tis past—a flash—
A heart-pulse of heart's ease—and then a cycle
Of fever; this is life—and death? . . . I come,
O plaintive Muse; lend me thy lyre a while,
So I may sing my songs else worthily.

[*He plunges into the darkness and disappears.*

GENIVE.

A Balcony overlooking a Garden. Time, Evening. GENIVE *alone.*

GENIVE.

I am very happy to-night. Across
The temple of my soul a cool hand passes,
Soft as the silk palm of an angel.
Under the lattice of my heart a lute
Reveals such treasures of unlyr'd music
As Israfel the heart-stringed harper makes.
A prayer-eyed stranger came into my conscience
When the round sun slid down the bevel'd west,
And all the sullied walls wash'd white as opal.
Mine eye, as yon lac-lighted star of space
Snatch'd burning from the breast of Night had lit
Its leaden iris, like a god's in love
Burns dazzlingly. Into my pulses now
I feel new ichor leaping from their fount,
As some Olympian jove to succor me
Had tapp'd his purple heart, transfusing it
Hot-hurrying to my shrunken veins. My lips,
Red as the red pomegranate's core with wine
Dropped on them from his lips all swoln with love,

Burning a blessed scar there, smart with bliss.
Unconsciously his hot hand rested here
A little instant on my scarlet neck:
I swear more joy was cramm'd in that one touch
Than twenty painless years sum up my life
Have measured. O I'm very, very happy!
The stars creep out upon the edge of night,
And peeping down love-sighful, envy me.
The troubled winds toil by me enviously,
Murmuring a plaintive plaint 'gainst my large joy.
The jealous angels fret their hours in heaven
Over the measure of my faultless joy—
I am so happy.

[*She hears a noise in the garden beneath.*

'Tis he, 'tis Jason!
He has relented. In my heart I hoped
He would return, and in my soul I wish'd
The life appointed us might all run out
In partings and returnings to part over.
But since this so sweet sorrow is denied me,
I would have all his life poured out in one
Supreme all-kiss, so I might smother me
In cloyment of excesses, and so die.
Jason, hist! is't thee?

[*She calls down in a low voice; there is no answer.*

I was deceived.
'Twas but the mockery of the envious winds.
They gibe me from their covert in the pines—
Yon ragged wood of gnarled pines fretting them
Like gray ghosts 'gainst the darkness; they are wroth

And acrid in the lees of their spent lives:
Being prick'd with memories of their prime, they moan
And cry out bitterly—I hate the pines!
O winds! O pines! why do ye mock me so?
Jason, come back to me and give the lie
To these leagued jealousies!

[*Enter* JASON *below, softly.*

JASON.

Genive! Genive!

GENIVE.

'Tis he! They said you would not come else, darling.

JASON.

Who spoke this treason of me?

GENIVE.

Voices
That haunt the shadows of the trailing night.

JASON.

They lied—spoke wanton lies of me, Genive.
I come not back! I—had they said the stars
Will sparkle no more on the breast of Night;

The moon—yon opal moon up in the heavens
To-night will mother more new-worlded loves
Than yon bent sea-beach boasts of yellow sands—
Will melt and wash out all the shining spheres;
God is not merciful and Hope is dead—
They had not lied; but saying this they spoke,
They lied most wantonly.

GENIVE [*musing*].

Ye pines, ye winds,
For that ye mocked me with your wanton lies
I pity you—I cannot hate you: all
The limit of my soul is gorged with love
So full it doth run over, and no thing
'Mid all earth's lovelessness I would not give
Some share of it:
In all my being is no room for hate.

JASON.

Genive.

GENIVE.

Thou didst come back to me. O Jason!
I told the Voices of the night thou would'st.
Poor plaintive Voices!—are they not the moans
Of spirits dying loveless plaintively
Bewailing all the aridness of hearts
Whose fallow bore but rank and poisonous weeds
For lack of husbandry?

JASON.

A most fair thought,
And tempered with sweet sadness; but are weeds
Not nature's levied tribute from the heart?

GENIVE.

Nay, nay. The sweet green grasses, banks of flowers,
And four-leafed clover spring up ere 'tis tilled:
'Tis only fallow hearts have borne a breast
Of shining sheaves, then, left neglected, bear
The stinging thistle and the barbèd burr.
Is't not so?

JASON.

Ay. I did but jest, Genive,
And echo the stern creed of moralists,—
Men aged in lovelessness, and matrons sere
And yellow with the frosts of nipping time.

GENIVE.

Shall we grow old and acrid like the rest?
May not the grasses grow in hearts are old
As green, the flowers as freshly bloom, the leaves
Put out luxuriantly, as when they donned
Their first spring's gala garb to welcome Love?

JASON.

In ours, Genive. We shall grow old in years,
And Time will set his sallow seal on me,

And on thy radiance; he shall touch nor age
Our hearts with his gray wrinkled hand at all.

GENIVE.

What if the fountain of our loves dry up,
Or turned into another channel, leave
Our hearts all parch'd and arid?

JASON.

Seest thou yon
Bright river threading like a thrum of light
The chasm of Palisades?

GENIVE.

God set it there!

JASON.

'Twill flow on so forever.
So runs the river Love between our hearts;
They are the barriers shall wall its flood
And shape its course for aye.

GENIVE [*abstractedly*].

I somewhere read,
Or fancied, or I dreamed, a maiden sat
Beside a noble river in some far land.
Bold mountains stretching cloudward till the clouds

Stooped down to kiss them, set their basalt breasts
'Gainst the great river's sides and held them. "Ever,"
The maiden mused—"thou 'lt flow on thus forever,
Pent in the chasm basaltic cloven of God."
When the ripe seasons rounding wrought a lustrum,
The maiden came to muse by the river else,
Loving its nearness to grand nature's God.
Lo! in the chasm were sands, and warty toads
Hopped where argosies had ridden, and snails
Hung on the ribb'd rocks slimily; where drooped
Long locks of Nature's loosed down-trailing hair,
Lizards slid and braided adders hissed:
One skilled in cunning whereby towers are built
That stretch to heaven, and huge-arched bridges wrought
And hooked on dizzy air, had cleft the rocks,
And cloven the mountain down to its iron heart,
Pouring the river into the yawning wound,
And thence by other shores to its goal the sea;
The shores it watered erst were dead and waste.

JASON.

What ghoul of heart's-ease hath stol'n on thy peace,
To gnaw it this life's night?

GENIVE.

I am so happy!—
I think not disembodied spirit, freed
From all the doubts and achings of this life,
Pardon'd of Christ, washed white of sin, and throned
On God's right hand is happier than I—
Yet a dim vague something haunts me like a Fear,

And darkens my large joy as drops of ink
Dropped in a tankard of white milk do cloud it.

JASON.

On this seventh night of Paradise, Genive!
Surely the serpent hath not entered here;
Yet I had guessed it from thy sombre speech,
And guessed thy large temptation and my fall,
Our banishment, and Cain's red-reeking hand—
Guessed—

GENIVE.

No, no, Jason! Draw no such
Dark etching on the walls of my glad heart.
Climb up here nearer to me.

[*He ascends to the balcony and they embrace.*

Let me feel
Your heart beat echoing all my own heart's joy,
Your breath sweet on my cheek, your yellow hair
Wrapt 'bout my neck and mingling with mine own
Like woof of sunshine with a warp of night,
Your lips grown on my lips—come closer—so.
The shadow passes.

AILEE.

A Sea View; Evening. GENIVE *and* AILEE.

GENIVE.

The Sea moans piteously to-night; I think
Some keen pain must have gashed his very heart.

AILEE.

Nay, 'tis remorse; on such a night as this
The spirits of slain myriads walk the deep,
And goad his memory to an agony.
O robber Sea!

[*A pause.*

GENIVE.

Remorse! I think it is.
It comes up like the hoarse and hollow roar
Of some deep-chested Titan agonized:
It is the blended groans of stalwart men,
His victims in unnumbered battle-storms,
Wringing the hoar ruffian's ruthless heart.

Listen! 'tis shriller now, and pierces through
The white beards of the breakers murmurously:
'Tis the merg'd cry of babes from mothers torn
(Like their own pulseful hearts wrench'd out) and toss'd
All suppliant, pleading, to the whetted waves.
Softer and more low and anguish'd now,
Till 't seems a Titaness' great dying sob:
This is the mingled sighs of women clasped
Close in his chill embrace and kissed to death;
They wear out all their grief in stifled moans.
O thou remorseful Sea.

AILEE.

O cruel Sea!

GENIVE.

Yet I have ever had a strange wild longing
To die drowned in the wrathful vast, to feel
The huge waves tighten round me loverly,
The Sea's cold kisses on my lips, my breast
White-shrouded in his tangled hair, my limbs
Swathed all in cerements of frozen froth.
O I think I could lie so quietly
Down in the deep vast waters!

[*A pause.*

Kissed to death!
Ailee, didst ever have a kiss full on thy lips?—
I mean not brothers' kisses, cold as dew,
Nor sisters', tepid, nor yet fathers', tame,

Friends', given at random on thy neck or cheek,
Nor mothers', chaste as ice is, on thy brow—
I mean a lover's kiss burnt on thy lips,
Leaving a blissful scar.

AILEE.

O Madam!

GENIVE.

Ah, but thou hast. 'Tis stamped all over thee:
It hangs red on thy lips, and breaking hues
Thy cheeks, thy neck, thy breasts—white hemispheres
Half hid in mists of spun gold hair. Nay, more;
If thou shouldst die to-night, and one should cut
Thee deep down to the crimson core, and pluck
Thy heart out quivering, 'twould be stamped on it.

AILEE [*sadly*].

He is dead.

GENIVE.

Poor heart! where is he buried?

AILEE.

Here in my memory.

GENIVE.

Then he is not dead?

AILEE.

To me—or was it I who died? There was
A death.

GENIVE [*aside*].

So young, so fair, so like a child!
So late was womanhood stamped on her life!
Yet a foul tragedy is woven of it!
O God! I think e'en feeble sucklings' lives
Hold histories of great griefs and large unrest,
So full of tragedy is this fair world.

[*To* AILEE.

Wilt thou not tell me thy heart's history, Ailee?

AILEE.

'Twould weary thee; the very thought of it
Doth make me O so weary, O so tired!

GENIVE.

Nay, 'twould not tire me, Ailee, and 'twould rest
Thy poor tired heart to lay it here a while;
Here on my own pour it all trembling out.

AILEE [*after a pause*].

He was very fair.

GENIVE.

Ay, all lovers are.

AILEE.

But mine was peerless.

GENIVE.

None had ever peer.

[*Sings.*

I ween that lover never
Was half so fair as mine is.
O lover mine, nor is nor ever
Was love so true as thine is.

Mine is peerless too. Was yours a fisher?

AILEE [*proudly*].

Nay, he was a gentleman, and hither
Came one summer from a city lying
A thousand leagues there mountainward—a grand
Old city, built by Cortès' knights, and isled
In fastnesses of hushed primeval steep.

[*A pause.*

O, he was brave as fair. One day a ship,
Blown on this rugged coast by adverse winds,

Struck a low-lying ledge of rocks—you line
O'er which the breakers climb in frothy rage—
And shivered to atoms in our very teeth.
Who there so stout of heart as risk his life
I' the storm-infuriate vast? The fishers stood
Blanched on the shore, or wandered up and down,
Calling each on each to join him, impotent.
Then, all unused to battling with wild waves,
He leapt into a boat, cast off the line,
Turned his pale face a moment seaward, shut
His hands hard on the bent oars, crying to me,
"Pray, Ailee!" then, caught on a heaven-high wave,
Hurled by wroth Ocean 'gainst the pelted shore
And bounding back far reefward, hung a speck
'Gainst the black sky, sunk, and—

GENIVE.

O, he was lost!

AILEE [*abstractedly*].

Ay, so he was—yes, he was lost—he died.
I prayed for him soul-suppliant, yet he died,
Yet he was lost there in that hell of yeast;
One toiled him, drowning.

GENIVE.

O rash noble soul!
Why pit his life 'gainst such exceeding odds?
How could he, loving you? 'Twas the last time
You looked upon him?

AILEE.

The last? Would it had been,
For then his memory had been white with me,
And lived a passion-flower within my heart,
Which I had nursed, and watered with my tears—
Not a barbed thorn growing up thro' it, as grows
The germ of sin up through the souls of men,
Dwarfing and maiming them.

GENIVE.

He was not drowned!

AILEE.

O no. I think the mermaids, envying me,
Buoyed him to, venge them for that I had been
Too happy in his love some little hours;
For when the fishers, seeing him sink, and all
The fated ship's souls deeming lost, toiled up
The steep lead-hearted to their homes, while I
Knelt on the wet sands praying a prayer of peace
For his freed spirit—lo, a mighty wave,
That seemed half irate Ocean's flood up-swoln,
Broke on the trembling shore leviathan-like,
Groaned a great sigh of rage, reel'd backward spent,
Snarling its impotence at howling feres,
Leaving him prone upon the salt sands swooning.
Christ! how my heart swell'd when I saw him there!
I crept to him, the froth'd surf raining from him,
And could have fal'n upon his white fair face,
And kissed the Sea's moist kisses from his lips,
And called his fled life back, or mine transfused,

Quick with the pulse of love, in his all hush'd—
But fell down stunned.

[*A long pause.*

I saw a face more fair,
More beautiful I thought than angels' faces,
Turned in mute pallidness to his, her cheek,
From which the heart-tide had not yet all ebbed,
Lying against his, all her midnight hair
Mingled with his, her arms white as an infant's
Braided about his neck, her breast quiescent,
From which the rude Sea had torn off the veil,
Bedded upon his breast and touching it,
Fondling it thro' the tatters rent by the storm.
I thought her dead, yet I did envy her
Her place there—O I envied her as woman,
Torn by the fangs of Jealousy and Hate,
And goaded by Despair, ne'er envied rival,
Viewing her empress of her own heart-realm.
Living, I could have killed her; dead, I envied:
And I swooned . . . Yet she was not dead—lived.

[*A pause.*

I saw her radiant as a spirit, bending
Her great black prayerful eyes on him,
Thanking him o'er and asking him, "O Basil,
What can I do or say or give to reward thee?
Thanks are so dumb!" And he her answering—
Had I been Basil and Basil I, then Basil
Had said that, being Basil. Basil said—
(I'd scorn him in my very soul who would not,
Yet an *he* had not, I had loved him triply!)—

"Thee—give me thyself, thyself, thou brightest
Star in the constellation of Woman!"
I saw him kiss the words from off her lips
As they came tremulously, "Ay, myself."

[*A pause.*

I saw them at the altar kneeling, I
Veiled as a mourner, for my heart was dead,
Coffined in Basil's; and I heard her swear
To love, to cherish, and to honor him,
And him heard echo huskily the words
Scarce audibly, "Ay, till death us do part."

[*A pause.*

I saw them—O they were the fairest two
E'er made in Allah's image—saw them pass,
Each on each eyes bending sheen with love,
Down the long stair-like street all clamorous
With plaudits of good will and peace and blessings.
I, standing there upon the beach alone,
Saw, heard, suffered in silence, making
No sign—saw while a desolation
That wrapp'd my soul came up from the Sea's unrest.

[*The shadows of night enfold them. With a look of unutterable longing, she peers out into the gloom broods over the Ocean. After a long pause—*

I saw their ship sail by and watched it praying
Glide far out to Sea—I watched it praying

He might go thro' his life all shadowless,
Hating him cursing him not, loving him—
And so go down, bearing him out forever.

GENIVE.

And yet you did not die!

AILEE.

I could not—Basil lived.

[*They descend the cliff and disappear in the darkness.*

THE MAGDALEN.

By the Sea—Night.

A magdalen with disorded dress and disheveled hair standing on a cliff, alone.

MAGDALEN [*sola*].

O the capacity of human hearts for woe!
I marvel if they never break with it.
Is there no limit to life's agony?
There seems no form of it unagonized.
Hear now the Sea's sad unrequited moan!
It comes up to me like a woman's sob,
The first wild impulse of her sorrow past,
And she all spent with tears poured on a grave,
Calling upon him sleeping there to let
Her lie down quietly and rest by him,
For she must surely die since he is dead.
What great pain gnaws thy heart to-night, O Sea?
O how I pity thee in thy large grief!
I would lie down with thee and list to it,
And tell thee all the measure of my own.
O I could lull thee with my dole, I think,
And thou couldst soothe me with thy larger woe.—
(Sad waves, I know ye would not harass me

As man hath baited me here in this life:
The sad are always gentle.)—I would lie
Quiescent in thy breast, content.—(O waves,
Reach up and clasp me to thy liege, the Sea!)

[*She draws nearer to the cliff's edge, where the surf breaks over her in rainy mists. Kneeling as in prayer, her eyes up-cast, she continues:*

Alone, alone, alone!
'Mid all the myriads not one
Genive can call her own.

Alone, alone, alone!
The last to call me friend is gone;
Hence I am banned, unknown.

No roof shall shelter me,
No tongue condone my fault's degree,
None veil my infamy.

Of all earth's millions who
Genive dare give his friendship to,
Or own he ever knew?

Driven from heart and home,
Unfriended to the Sea I come,
Bearing my error's sum.

Even the stars of night
A little year since shone so bright,
Me now deny their light.

When I was white they vied
To light me to my lover's side,
Nor ever me denied.

O stars! I am not quite
All stained—I've still some weft of white:
Give me one look to-night!

Give me, since all has died—
All else—a look to ruth allied,
And I am satisfied!

Oh! I can better dare
The mien of scorn all mortals wear
Than thy oblivion bear.

If but to chasten, why
One last sign give me ere I die—
Look where I pleading lie!

Vain!—ruth died when I fell.
Is there no pity but in hell,
Where I am doomed to dwell?

Ay, thou wilt pity me,
O waves, O unrequited Sea!
I come, I come to thee!

[*She rises, and with a wild look backward into the darkness, bends her body forward for the death-leap. A figure—that of a woman—clad in white appears and clasps her hard to her bosom. A struggle ensues, in which the Magdalen is drawn away from the brink of the precipice, and falls down in terror to the earth. A flash of lightning reveals the pale features of a beautiful girl. Clasping the fallen woman's head to her heart, she whispers:*

Not all friendless, sister.

MAGDALEN.

Art thou a spirit?

MAIDEN.

Nay, only a woman like you.

MAGDALEN.

Like me!
Hush!—thou know'st not what I am.

MAIDEN.

A sister
I know you are, stricken; I ask no more.

MAGDALEN [*aside*].

She does not guess the measure of my shame.
I'll tell her, and so banish her, that I
May lie down letless in my warm wide bed
With my new-wedded liege and lover, Death.

[*To the Maiden.*

Come closer—put the hollow of thine ear
Against these scarlet lips, so none may hear—

Not even God—my purple secret—so:
I am—a wanton!

MAIDEN.

And yet my sister.

MAGDALEN [*recoiling from her*].

Know'st thou the fearful import o' that word?

MAIDEN.

I guess it, and still say—my sister.

MAGDALEN.

Child!—
Thou art a very child—thou canst not guess it.
Thy ruth, thy gentleness, thy very presence
Impeach thy words. Daughter of Eve, a wanton
Is woman wrested from her high estate
And dragged thence downward to a man's low level.

MAIDEN.

Why, surely then this thing you are is noble.
I have—

MAGDALEN.

A lover?

MAIDEN.

How could you guess it?—
My Ulrich is not low, not base—a man
Like other men—that is, *some* other men
Are like my Ulrich—yet not quite like him.
O you should see how manly a man he is—
Tall and frank and true,—

MAGDALEN.

'Tall and frank and true'!

[*Aside.*

Ah, what an egotist is babbling Love!
Like other men—yet stay, not quite like them!
Thou lily-bell of womanhood, God grant
He may not be quite like them! Frank and true!
How frank was mine, how true—how manly true!
She prattles of nobility, sweet infant,
And says the thing I am is noble eke,
Being like the idol man she bows down to!
If I were half her arch-god Ulrich seems,
There were no other being in Allah's guise
One twentieth tithe as perfect—save her Ulrich.
I too once held men less than angels are
But by the utt'rest monad floats in space,
Because forsooth my Jason was a man!
Nay, Genive, an thou'ldst have this novice learn
The utter import of the thing thou art,
Thou needs must teach from text-books else than man.

[*To the Maiden.*

I am—dost ever read thy bible, child?

MAIDEN.

Surely; all read the bible.

MAGDALEN.

Ay, ay—all!
Rememberest thou the story of a woman
Who came for refuge to the side of Christ—
So vile a thing her sisters spat on her,
And men—true, noble men like Ulrich—stoned her?

MAIDEN.

Yes, yes—a piteous tale of cruelty
Has ever made my heart run out in tears—

MAGDALEN.

She was a wanton, no more vile than I.

[*A pause.*

Not shrink from me as from a naked Sin!

MAIDEN.

Nay, love you still. Had I been flesh when Christ
Built up the cordon of His mercy twixt
The Magdalen and man's hard cruelty,
I had stooped down and kissed His mantle's hem,
And twin'd my arms about her whom He whiten'd,
Ev'n as I now twine them around you, loving.

MAGDALEN [*shrinking from her, aside*].

I marvel if the angels visit earth
And take on forms of flesh for ministry,
Or if there still be spirits ministrant
Who hover near this troubled world of ours
To succor whom God's every image scorns.
Surely 'tis no form of sensate flesh
Doth fold a purple Sin hard on her heart
And whisper piteously, 'I love you still.'

[*To the Maiden.*

Spirit or what thou art so more than human,
I would I might look on thy sinless face,
All free from sin's dark lines and cruelty's,
And read in thy two eyes thy history—
A life unsullied with an evil thought!
I think 'twould make me whiter by some jot,
And leave my soul less dappled ere I die.
An thou art not an angel, heaven is wronged,
And earth made holier by thy presence here.

[*A flash of lightning reveals the features of the Maiden.*

That face! I saw it in a dream last night.
It hovered o'er me suppliant then, pursued
By some dark-visaged Danger—some strange shape
That—first a shadow void and changeful e'er—
Grew up thro' all the unseen forms of things
To something somewise human, toiling thee;
Then forth from out the shadow whilst thou pray'd
Grew dark and sinister a bearded man,
Who vanishing in mists revealed thee prone
Stretched on the bare earth pale as Death's white face,
Save on thy cheek a sole deep scarlet mark,
Which ev'n thy tears could not wash out or dim:
And then the heap'd waves touching me, I woke . . .
What art thou?

MAIDEN.

Only a woman.

MAGDALEN.

A woman—
Only a woman! Ah, how slight a thing!
Frail after-thought of God for man's caprice;
A pale excrescence on fair Nature's face;
A dream—light fancy set to soul and sense;
A faint white flame, lit now and now anon
To guide men heavenward, puffed out with a breath;
An ampler puppet which the larger child
E'er wearying of like children turns him from
To seek some other toy yet unpossess'd!
Why camest thou here?

MAIDEN.

To hear what messages
The waves bore up from Ulrich.

MAGDALEN.

Messages!
The language of the Sea is ever sad,
And illy suits the light soft mood of love.
What messages?

MAIDEN.

I nightly list me here
At the still hour of twilight to low words
Come up o'er—whisper'd by the courier waves.
This was our compact when he kissed me there
Five long years gone—there on the dimpled sands,
His mates all clamorous (for the sails were set):
'Here list, Dolores, for my soft good night;
Whatever clime, whatever seas I roam,
I'll whisper it to the waves and they to you.'
I listen and I hear, 'Good night, my sweet;"
I answer and the waves repeat, 'Good night.'

MAGDALEN [*aside*].

O brightest jewel in the crown of life,
A heart's full faith! O opal of gemmed heaven,
Dropped in this night of earth to be its sun!

The heart can boast thee for its dowry, tho'
The rude dark-dappled hand of Treason sack
Its cities and lay waste its fair demesnes,
Is Crœsus-rich. Thou art the talisman
Doth touch a lie, and lo! it beams a truth,
Doth gild a treason till it stands a liege,
Bridge o'er the chasms of despair and doubt,
Dam up the rivers of suspicion, stair
The steep where gleams the temple of content,
And thence hew rundles up to God. But woe—
Black damning woe—is any poor heart faithless.

[*To the Maiden.*

Thou said'st the waves brought messages to thee.
Do they ne'er fail thee?

MAIDEN.

Days and nights have come,
And lengthened to the weeks, and weeks to months
Have joined them, till the many-numbered score
Doth tell a lustrum of memorial years,
Yet never day they brought no benediction.
Sometimes 'tis plaintive, fraught with eager sighs
For home and me; anon 'tis joyous, glad,
And wakes the winds with laughter; else the waves
Toiled with the tempest lisp it thro' the storm
In trembling whispers: but 'tis always gentle,
And tempered sweet with love and constancy.

MAGDALEN.

To-night—what said the waves to-night, sweet houri?

MAIDEN.

Their speech was utter and set all to love:
At first 'twas broken, like the timid tongue
Of recent lovers; soon it grew more bold,
And swelled up musically to full notes
Of larger joy; then overmastering bounds,
It broke into a grand refrain of passion
Thrilled the fibers of my soul till they
Caught up æolian-like the symphony
And echoed and re-echoed it—'I love thee!'
Then sinking—sinking—sinking—died
In sighs of perfect rhythm, whence 'good night'
Came floating like a thought scarce audibly.
Did you not hear it?

MAGDALEN.

Yes—yes—I heard it.

[*Aside.*

O Sea, e'en thou art James—languaged like
That other form of nature, sovereign man!

[*To the Maiden.*

Maiden—but stay. I turn iconoclast,
Whom Fate hath shown the true unglamour'd faith!
The Hindu I have heard is happy till
Some nomad saint, some wan evangelist,
Creeps in the temple of his ancient trust

And glooms it with a newer, till he doubts
If either be the true one: thou art joyed
With thine idolatry, and thou wilt be
Till some evangelist of withered love,
Herself imquiet, gloom thy heart with doubt.
Yes—yes—I heard it.

MAIDEN.

Yet you would have—

MAGDALEN.

List!
Dost thou not hear the loud Sea calling me?
He's angered with my loitering.—Yes, I come,
I come, O Sea!—One touch, sweet, ere I pass.
So I may bear a charm—so I may show
The pallid pressure when ill spirits toil
My soul in passing—so: whom angels touch
The demons may not harass . . . . Sweet, good-bye—
A last, unending, agonized good-bye.
Bless thee Christ!—my sins are paler for it,
And thou—thou art not purpled with the touch,
So white as opal Purity art thou.—
I come—I come!

[*She rushes away from the Maiden's embrace and leaps from the precipice into the sea. The Maiden, dumb, hurries to the edge of the cliff. Peering down into the dark waves, a flash of light-*

ning reveals the Magdalen risen from the depths. A smile lights up her pale features for an instant, then she sinks forever into the deep, murmuring back to the Maiden:

Weep not, sweet spirit—smile—I rest.

BASIL.

High on a headland, where huge waves
Beat thundering from a thousand leagues
'Gainst gray basaltic battlements,
A sole woe-withered pilgrim stands,
Bare-browed, his blank locks driven far,
Like shreds of sea-foam tempest-swept.
He seems the oldest, saddest man
Time ever blanched or sorrow bruised.
Lo! answering now his moan with moan,
He fronts the Sea, while seas of surf
Rain on his desert-darkened face:

Purposeless, drifting
Over the desert
Of the Journey of Life,
Ev'n as the sands drift
Over the desert
Of the Journey of Death;*
Weary of living
And fearing to die,
Death e'er beguiling

* A desert in Mexico, called *Jornada del Muerta*—Journey of Death.

And clinging to life,
I follow the phantom—
The fleeing eidolon—
The spirits name Hope.
Ever the phantom is
Beckoning, ever
The eidolon lures me
Over the desert.

With nothing to hope for,
I journey aweary,
And follow the phantom
Of Nothing named Hope.
Knowing I may not
Realize aught,
I cling to the eidolon
Phantom called Hope—
Vanishing mirage
(Form evanescent)
Magical Hope—
Shade of a shadow,
Soul of a spirit,
Tragical Hope—
The beautiful siren
The demons name Hope—
Eidolon, fanciful
Phantom-fiend Hope.

Beckons the phantom,
And whispers a fair lie—
Fair and so perfectly
Set to my passion,
I listen, believing,
Knowing so surely
Still 'tis a foul lie,

Fatal as Upas.
But 'tis so beautiful,
Rare and symphonic
A lie, that I never
Grow weary of being
Under its spell.

'Tis no harsh dutiful
Measure, this beautiful
False and rare story
Hope is e'er whispering
In my charm'd ear.
Could you but listen to—
Do you not, weary one?—
Words so enchantingly
Low, soft and tender spoke,
You, even as I do,
Would her importunate
False protestatious love
Better than Truth's.

For Truth is so drearily,
Wearily circumspect,
Crooning of treasures lost,
Past opportunities;
Now for what might have been
Sighing, and now for what
Should have been:
Truth is so dutiful!

Truth is a jilted jade,
Acrid and jealous.
Hope is a plighted maid,
Trustful and tender—O

Woudrously trustful—
Viewing all humankind
Thro' the fair eidolon
Lens of a lover.

Whispers the phantom Hope:
Come unto me, all
Ye who are weary
And heavy laden,
Rest I will give ye.
Whispers the phantom Hope
Softly to me—O
So softly. I fancy
Her love it lies tenderly
Here in my breast—
So sweetly, I fancy
Her love it lies trustfully
Here in the haven
Of its natural rest,
Whispering to me
The unspoken passion
Of a passionate life.

Truth whispers: Not for thee
Burns the rare passion
Of passionate Ailee.
Thy passion for Ailee
Is evil, comporting
Ill with thy duty.
Duty! O saturnine
Omen of weariness,
Unuttered dreariness
Deep in my heart!
Out of my memory

Burn I all trace of thee
Now with the passion
That burns in my heart—
With the passion for Ailee
That glows in my heart.

Hope whispers: Only
For thee burns the passion
Of passionate Ailee.
Duty is dutiful,
Worshipping Faith—
Faith is a beautiful
Passionless wraith:
Cold as the marble is,
Duty and Faith.

So, to the fair lie—
Fair and so perfectly
Set to my passion—
I listen, believing,
Knowing so surely
Still 'tis a foul lie,
Fatal as Upas.
But 'tis so beautiful,
Rare and symphonic
A lie, that I never
Grow weary of being
Under its spell:
Hopelessly hoping
Ailee may rest
(Knowing she may not)
Here in my breast—
Hoping she one day
May lie in my breast—

Trustfully refuge seek
Here in the haven
Of her natural rest—
I listen, believing,
Knowing she may not.

[*An old man in the garb of a hunter appears.*

HUNTER [*aside*].

How sad, how desolate, how agonized!
A hunter? Nay, he seems not of our guild.
If his wild eager eyes be any sign,
He's hunted more than hunter: I have seen
The same look in a netted ocelot's eye,
When the toiled beauty spent lay pain-unnerved,
Quiescing to despair, yet hope unyielding.
I'll speak to him. Good morning, stranger.

BASIL [*startled*].

Who said good morning? [*Sees the hunter.*
Why do you steal upon my reverie like
An Indian stalking foes? I sought this steep
Because I hate the ways of man, believing
I might here shut me from his peering eye.
Pray leave me.

HUNTER.

I would not any wise intrude—

BASIL.

Then leave me.

HUNTER.

As you will; but ere I go
It were but courteous—

BASIL.

Spare your courtesy—
I'll take it for granted—go.

HUNTER.

Unwittingly
I overheard some fragments of your speech,
And—

BASIL.

Thou! what if thou didst? I spoke in runes
To such as thou: my speech was of the heart.

HUNTER.

I have a heart.

BASIL.

Thou!—a red-arteried heart?

HUNTER.

It bleeds when prick'd—is that assurance?

BASIL.

Has't ever bled? has't scars gashed deep in it
That baffle surgery?

HUNTER.

One.

BASIL.

Then we are brothers.
Prithee sit down and tell me in what war
Thou 'st wounded.

HUNTER.

I' the War of Hearts.

BASIL.

I fought in that war—'twas a sanguine fight
How wast thou wounded?

HUNTER.

Mortally i' the soul,

In this wise:

A maiden exquisite
As the brides in Asgard are
Crept in my heart of hearts
And lay with my soul one night—
Crept in so silently
I had not guessed she came,
But Peace, my soul's mistress,
Finding her there, Unrest
Bribed to abide with me
In the guise of the maiden e'er,
And she was divorced for aye
From my infatuate soul.

A year and a day crept by—
A cycle of pain to me—
Still the maiden slept
E'er in my heart of hearts,
Fro'ward her cruelty
Had banished my darling Peace.
Wan and exceeding old,
Hoar in a year and day,
Worn and aweary, I
Questioned the maiden why
She had beleaguer'd me.
Then, with an arch surprise,
Answered she in this wise:
"Why? 'Twas no fault of mine;
There was no fault but thine—
Sin culpa de mia.

"Thou camest unbidden," I—
"Thou didst not banish me"—
"Thou banished my darling Peace"—

"Thou didst not bid her stay"—
"Thou fettered my reason with
Thy passion-compelling eyes"—
"Then in them the error lies"—
"Thy nectarine wine-red lips"—
"Then whoe'er their nectar sips
Doth drink of the error's fount"—
"Thy bosom of madding mould"—
"Let it the error hold"—
"Thine infinite tenderness"—
"Ah! therein the true fault is"—
"Thy touch as a torch of fire
Doth kindle a mad desire"—
"I had not touch'd thee e'er,
Knowing the fault was there"—
"Thy sighs when our lips were blent"—
"In sighs is much error pent"—
"Thy glances eloquent of
Indies of voiceless love"—
"Guile in a maiden's glance
Dwelleth by some ill chance"—
"Thy silence and drooping eyes"—
"Abode of the silent lies,
Woman's ally in love,
Dower, and treasure-trove"—
"The spell in thy driven hair
Dipp'd in the swart midnight"—
"Certes, I grant thee there
Dwelleth a mickle might;
Many a' weening wight
Hath found in a lady's hair
Blown by the wanton winds
In tempests across his cheek
Yearnings I may not speak:
Thus did the primal Eve

Adam's error achieve,
And millions the apple o'er
Have thus to the apple's core
Tasted, and some I hear
Have died of the serpent there"—
"The amaranth in thy cheek"—
"I did not set it there"—
"The bobolink in thy laugh"—
"Nay, 'twas a mocking bird"—
"Thou didst not tell me so"—
"Did e'er a maiden thee?"—
"Not what thy passion hath
Spoken, but what thou ne'er
Uttered, save with a look,
Sign, or so eager clasp:—
Yet 'twas no fault of thine,
Yet 'twas no fault but mine,
I did my darling Peace
Exile, and worship thee
With damning idolatry!"

"Nay"—with her bobolink's
Laugh, that enchanted me
E'en in my agony—
"Say 'twas my bosom's fault,
Or my so erring eyes',
Lips', or my tenderness.'—
Say 'twas my madding touch—
Say 'twas my swooning sighs,
Glances so eloquent,
Silence and driven hair—
Say 'twas the amaranth,
Laugh of the bobolink,
Voice in each passionate
Pressure of breast and thigh,

Warm cheek and pulse aflame—
Held the grave error;
Not that 'twas thine or mine—
We were unwitting.
But thou hast loved me well
Now for a year and day—
Long for a love to live!—
And I'm aweary.
Woo and wed Peace again—
One who can love a year
Meriteth Hymen's realm—
Pass, and be happy else,
Plodding and dutiful."

[*A long pause.*

Aged æons I journey'd
Over the hemispheres
In quest of my darling Peace,
Asking in every zone
From Thule to Farther Ind,
Meeting afar with none
Knowing her, till one day,
Deep in a quiet vale,
Far from the haunts of men,
Out of the ways of strife,
One my darling said
Now was another's wife:
Faith, my ancient foe,
Woo'd and won her when
I had banished her.
Deep in the valley's fold
I found her sitting by
Her liege in the calm twilight,
Children twain—Surcease

And Joy—upon her knee,
My own first-born, Content,
(Grown to a rosy boy,
Fair and frank and brave
As the sons of the Southland are,)
Waking the echoes with
A song I had taught him ere
I was divorced from Peace.—
O 'twas a scene to wring
The soul of a man perturb'd.—
Veiled in the shadows, I
Crept to my darling's side,
Touching her mantle's hem;
But as a stranger she
Bent her soft eyes on me,
Knowing me not, I'd grown
So palsied, sear and so wan.
Chastened, I neared my boy,
Asking, "Who taught thee that
Song?" "My father," he.
"Who is thy father?" I.
"He"—with a distant look
Afar in the past—"is dead."
"I am thy father," I
Whispered the singer. "Nay,
He was a youth as fair
As the knights of the Holy Grail;
Thou art a bent old man,
Bowed with thy weight of years,
And over thy ancient brow
Furrows are chased of woe,
Wrong to another done,
Care, and a keen remorse.
My father was good and true,
My mother says, and died

One night of a fever far
In the South—a fever named
Unrest—remaining so."
Blessing my darling then
That she my memory white
Had kept with him, I crept
(Kissing her mantle's hem)
Out in the shadows, out
Alone in the silent night,
Bearing my burden, but
Bearing a braver heart
And better.

[*A pause.*

The years are born
And die, and I wander still
Over the hemispheres,
Haunted by phantoms of
The maiden false as fair
Who crept in my heart of hearts
That night of woe, who e'er
Whisper in voices loud
As the voice of Conscience is—
"*Sin culpa de mia.*"

[*Basil rising approaches the hunter. The hunter brooding gazes out through the mists to the blue vast beyond. After a long pause, with a great sigh that seems by memory up-wrung from his heart's depths, moanfully he repeats the words—*

Sin—culpa—de mia!

BASIL.

Christ! is there aught but agony in life?
I hear it from the lips of men, see women
Weep it from out their hearts in molten drops;
Babes borne into the world on wails of it,
And spent souls groping graveward moaning it.
I marvel if the grave will echo it.
Hunter, why do you live?

HUNTER.

Alas!—Why die?

BASIL.

Ah, why!—that you may gain immortality?
Then live—cling to life—fight for it,
Immortality—what is it? Another
Degree of anguish, some larger eternity
Of pain.

HUNTER.

Then why die?

BASIL [*bitterly*].

So that thine agony
May not pall—'tis keener there.

HUNTER.

In death?

BASIL.

Ay, in the Hereafter men call
Death—in the illimitable Hereafter.

HUNTER.

But my darling lives.

BASIL.

She is dead to thee:
She can never more be thine.

HUNTER.

In Heaven?

BASIL.

Heaven! Have stout men turned to children?
Have iron-will'd men fall'n to imbeciles?
Babbling of Heaven! Heaven—what is it?
A place of peace. Hast thou a thing called conscience?

HUNTER.

Alas! yes.

BASIL.

And thou dost babble of Heaven!
The immortal spark in man named conscience
Can never die, can never rest, lives ever
'Tis the imperishable curse of nature's God,
Sent down thro' all time's dolorous mutations
From the Garden of Eden. 'Twas the ban God-spoken
'Pon Eve, 'pon Adam, and their sons and daughters—
"Go, and bear with ye evermore a conscience!"
O that I might crush it out of me!
It haunts me ever like a pallid Fear.
Some grand heroic souls have conquered it,
And chained it to a rock where break the tides
That roll up ceaseless from the sea Unrest.
They were the mightiest spirits born of woman,
By whom the Alexanders of this earth
Were less than Liliputs—they were content,
For they had compassed conscience—more than worlds!
O enviable, O heroic, happy souls! . . . .
An thou canst quell thy conscience, thou canst rest;
An thou canst kill thy conscience, Heaven is thine:—
Thou canst not quell or kill it.

HUNTER [*after a long pause*].

I heard you sing of hope—

BASIL.

'Twas a memory—
A phantom—nothing more—a mirage
Of the brain—the puny offspring
Of Imagery—a sickly child
Of distorted Thought—a miscarriage
Of Mind in her nonage.

HUNTER.

It touch'd my heart.

BASIL.

Because we are feres in adversity.
The outcast loves the outcast—are we not
Outcasts of fate? Ours is common cause.
Do you dwell in the city yonder?

HUNTER.

I am a hunter. My home is the world,
My abiding-place where the shadows
Of night enfold me, my shelter
The vault of heaven, my companions
The mute white stars. In the city
I chafe and fret like a caged ocelot.
I hate the faces of men, they are so hard,
Like the hard coin they stamp their souls with.
I hate the faces of women, they mock me so.
Do you dwell down in the city?

BASIL.

I tarry there, bound: I am a convict.

HUNTER [*scornfully*].

A felon!

BASIL.

Mine was no common theft,
That you should shrink from me, spurn me.
I was no vulgar thief; I was a genius
In the art of felony, and aimed at heights
Towering above the herd. I was
The Cæsar of felons, the Antony
Of robbers, the Napoleon of thieves.
I sacked the fairest life God ever builded.
My booty was a maiden's ravished heart.
Stol'n from her, pinioned, borne in triumph
Thro' all the journeyings of my crazed caprice,
Bearing the impress of my ownership,
So none should seeing this e'er covet it,
I grew aweary, carried it back to her,
Sitting disconsolate, waste, in the ruins
Of her young life, and cast it at her feet,
A broken, a sullied thing ev'n beggars scorn'd.

HUNTER.

You said you were a convict.

BASIL.

So I am:
Impeached by Memory, and arraigned before
The high court of Conscience, I was judged
Guilty, condemned, and sentenced
To life-imprisonment with one I loathe—
Sentenced to drag thro' the years with her
Chained to me, bound to me with bands
Indissoluble—Hymen's bands.
Now, as I toil up and down the earth,
Men point the finger of scorn at me,
Crying, *Basil, the Cardicide!*

HUNTER.

How just, how terrible a sentence!
I pity you. Adieu. Our ways have crossed,
And we have gloomed eachother's lives an instant,
Not unprofitably, I fancy, each
Having in each discovered agonies
As keen as his, and having forgotten his
In pity a little instant. *Adios.*

[*The hunter descends the cliff and disappears.*

BASIL [*after a pause*].

Gone, bearing his anguish away with him!
'Tis the old, old story oft-repeated.
O Conscience, thou austere accuser,
Thou inexorable foe of human peace,

Thou clamorous censor of men's tragedies,
None can escape thee!

[*A storm bursts upon him.*

God—if there be a God—
Doth speak to his fallen daughter.
His speech—how grandly it breaks and echoes
Across the expanse of heaven! how grandly
The hexameters of thunder, the spondees
Of tempest, utter his wrath sublime!—
His speech is of Paradise—of Eden—
The serpent—Eve's large temptation—
The fall and the banishment.
O Eve, dost thou hear the impeachment?—
Thou didst eat of the tree of Conscience!

[*He stands breasting the storm. A thunderbolt shatters a venerable pine at his feet, and it falls moaning to the earth.*

Broken like a reed! So is the life of man
Broken by the bolts of Conscience.

[*The storm passes away. Basil descends the cliff and disappears.*

LAST OF THE DRYADES.

I.

Far from the fret of the breaker,
Far from the wrinkled steeps,
Far from the reef where the wrecker
Nightly his vigil keeps!
Far from the ways of traffic,
Out of the trader's toils
Into the ways seraphic,
Out of my demon's coils!
Far from the mills of Mammon,
Far from the wiles of woman,
Far and away from the aching
Of human hearts that are breaking!
Far from the toiling city,
Out of the babylon
Of mimes in the pitiless town
Into the ways of pity!
Far from the passion-fever
Burning, burning ever
My soul, consuming never
My soul—an ill that neither

Kills nor dies—O fever!
Far from a civilization
Aging a man in youth,
Out of the desolation
Wrought of a dearth of ruth!
Out of the passion-gleam,
Past the frontier of steam,
Where nor click of the car yet
Sounds, nor the telegraph
Dins in my ear the scarlet
Sum of the nations' grief,
Nor sickles a cosmosheaf
Of broken faith, and o'erbroken
Plights of a troth o'erspoken,
Loves that are dead in a day,
Hearts in a little hour
Wrecked by the subtle power
Held by a maiden o'er
Bearded and bronzed clay,
Hopes that are withered and sear
All in their natal year—
Out of the teeming high-ways
Into the quiet by-ways!

II.

Lulled by the bobolink
And robin, I lie, nor think,
Idling my life away
In my hammock a many day.—
Nor think! ah that is nepenthe,
That is the sole surcease,
The only abiding peace,
God in his mercy sent the
Toilers of earth—nor think!
Think of it, baited one,

So earger, so pale and wan,
Striving to win a fame
Prouder than others won,
Striving to carve a name
Higher than any can,
Striving to gain a love
Ever more constant than
Maiden to mortal gave—
Striving ever in vain!
Think of the days and nights
Of thought that charred your brain
Down to a shriveled pain!
Think of the brazen nights,
Think of the leaden days,
That builded the bitter years,
Barren of any tears,
Bearing but thistle-thoughts,
Barbèd, tigerish yearnings,
Turbulent passion-burnings:
Think—and nevermore think!

III.

Here is an euthanasy
Of toil and the strivings vain—
(Ever the momus Gain
Shunneth the timid daisy.)
Never the mammoth dailies,
Moist with the mingled tears
Of hearts in the hemispheres,
Pour in my ear a tale is
Burdened with woman's sighs,
Laden with orphans' cries,
Printed in blood, till Justice
Veils her face at the lust is
Rife, and the agony

Wrung from his fellow-man
By man in his cruelty.
Never the fever comes
Here in the quietude.
Peace in the highest seems
Ever the perfect days
Here in the leafy ways.
Never the churlish, rude,
Clamorous voice of Strife
Chastens my charmèd life
Here in the solitude.
Only a lulling voice
Sighing a song of peace
Under the twining trees
Maketh my heart rejoice;
Low and as magical
As the voice of a woman is,
Stilling the tragical
Voice of my demon—'tis
The voice of a spirit dwells
Only in leafy vales,
Only in silent ways
Far from the din of drays,
Far from the rush of mills
Near to the hush of rills,
Far from the thoroughfare
Near to the plashing mere,
Out of the babylon
Deep in the way unknown:
Spirit of Passion's-ease,
Last of the Dryades!

IV.

Oh! 'tis the lotus-land
Of the age of Steam: I stand

Isled in the midst of seas
Of clover and twining trees,
And oceans of rolling corn
Fretting the reefs of thorn,
Marged with a continent
Of primeval wood, content.
Care is forgotten here.
Far the receding near.
All in the hectic past
Lies in a memory-mist:
Wife of my agèd youth,
Ambition; children, Toil,
Strife and the wan Turmoil;
Friends—what friends! I never
Honored a friend who ever,
Tried in the crucible
Of friendship, served me well;
Home—fair eidolon
To many a homeless one,
To me an eidolon
Unlovely, having none
Save in a hollow name,
Save in a shallow fame
Void of a meager truth.
Better a vagabond
On the face of the arid earth,
Than home and a fatherland
Where love is a waning dearth,
And Faith is a fickle queen
With a dragon's eye of green,
And Trust unbidden waits
Weeping without the gates
Of a heart forever shut,—
Not unremembered, but
Never regretted, all

I cherished so long and well,
Cherished so long ago,
Cherished so well in woe:
Perish the memory o'er
Cherish I nevermore!

V.

Idling now by the sea
Quiescent, and listlessly
Viewing the clover-surf
Fretting the stubble-turf,
Messages come up to me,
Come from over the sea,
Come from an alien gone,
Come from a world unknown
Hitherto unto me,
Come up so silently
Out of the voiceless sea,
Low must I bend my ear
Lest the refrain they bear
Die on the languid air:

1.

"Out of the realm of the Dutiful,
Here in the realm of the Beautiful,
Dwell with me ever;
Dwell with me here in my Dreamland,
Out of the strife of thy Steamland,
Turbulent never.

2.

"Dwell with me out of resentment,
Here in the vale of Contentment
Languorous lying

Far from a futile ambition,
Near to the rill of Fruition,
Where is no vying.

3.

"Here in the heart of the wild wood
Dear to the heart of thy childhood
Standeth a Palace,
Built for me by the builder
Of dreams at the forge of the gilder
Of Borealis.

4.

"Dwell with me here in my Palace;
Never the arrows of Malice
Or Envy shall wound thee.
Dwell with me here as my lover;
Ever my spirit shall hover
An ægis around thee."

Lo! 'tis the voice of the Spirit—
Spirit of Passion's-ease—
Seeming more low as I near it
Now in my ecstasies.
Lo! from the fairest of valleys
Towers her stately Palace;
She from the open portal
Beckons her lover-mortal.
Spirit, I come, and never
Shall demon our souls dissever!

. . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . .

VI.

Wound in my love's embraces
Tightly, as twining laces
Vine e'er its lover oak,
Time burns no cruel traces
Into my heart, or effaces
Aught that my love awoke.
Days that were ages are instants,
Nights that were cycles are flashes,
Nights to my conscience were lashes
Now to my conscience are min'strants.
All the day long, never thinking,
I with my love—ever drinking
Nepenthe she holds to my lips—
I with my love in her Palace
Drain the nepentheline chalice.
All the night long, intertwining
Her love with my love, and reclining
My soul on her soul, I am lying,
Lulled by her languorous sighing,
Stilled by the blisses outvying
I fancy the blisses of dying.
O 'tis the rest of repletion!
The days are but days of mutations
Of blisses as perfect as this is;
For here are no ordered gradations
Of rest and no temperate blisses.
My heart is so lulled I can scarcely
Measure its leisure pulsations—
Heart but now pulsing so fiercely!
The turbulent sun of my Steamland
Drowsily over my Dreamland
Idles the afternoon.
The loitering love-lorn moon
Lies in a long love-swoon.

Nor sphere in the sky nor a star is
But charm'd with the idolence tarries
Where rest ever stills, never wearies.
The wrens in the bramble-thicket
Whisper their loves, the cricket
Under the Palace walls
Scarce in a whisper calls.
Out of the pine its groan,
Out of the wind its moan,
Out of the leaf its tremor,
Out of the rill its murmur.
O! 'tis a very Eden
Of quiet dropped from heaven,
And I and my love content
Will idle forever here—
Never the demon Steam
Shall banish us . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . .

VII.

Again—
It comes—the ringing
Turbulence here, the stinging
Turbulence here in my brain!—
Clasp me, belovèd Spirit
Nearer to thee—I hear it
Now like a tempest coming
Swift through the lurid gloaming.
Hark! how it shrieks, till Terror
Trembles aghast as nearer,
Loud as the crash of battles
Swiftly the monster rattles!
Up and away, or perish!

For 'tis the locomotive,
Thing of the trader votive,
Thing the perturbèd cherish.
Hear in the monster's hisses
Knells of thy lavish blisses.
Lo! in the teeming train is
Traffic, and wanton Pain is
There, and the hectic Vices,
Ay, and the wan Unrest;
Crime and the foul Excesses;
Anguish and Agony,
Feres of the Cruelty
Of cities—Strife is there,
Grief and surceaseless Care,
Gain, and the harlot bold,
Ambition, grown o'er-old;
Avarice, leashed to his beagles,
Want and the gaunt Diseases,
(Ghoul that no gorge appeases,)
Counting his hoarded eagles.
Lo! in the gilded coaches
Too the malign Reproach is:
There are her sisters Toil,
Envy and pale Turmoil,
Murder, the grim Remorses,
Theft, and the triple Curses,
Self and her Greed, and Malice;
Lust and the wanton Follies;
Pride in her scorn, and Fashion,
Hate, and unrighteous Passion,
Slander, whose glance but sullies.
Sorrow is there a guest
Of Death, and I see a face
Veiled, and her fettered hand
Bearing a shattered wand:

Lo! 'tis the form of Peace.
These are the dwellers newly
Come to the happy valleys,
Come to the Ultime Thule.

. . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . .

VIII.

Vanished, my castles gilded,
Buried, the hopes I builded,
O'er, the ecstatic instant,
Banished, my angel min'strant!
Teem the enchanted valleys
With men in the quest of Mammon,
Children o'er-old; and woman,
Aged in her youth with pain,
Toils in the mills of Gain.
Strangers are in the Palace:
Traders, whose ribald laughter
Echoes from sill to rafter,
Sit in the gilded halls
Decking their tawdry stalls,
Luring the passers by
To list with the oily lie
That baffles truth—a stable
'Tis for the iron horses
Drink at its fountains' sources.
Lo! from the gilded babel
View I a something pallid
Seeming a-swoon—I near it:
Woe! 'tis my stricken Spirit—
Dead! by the demon slain,
Prone on the gleaming rails,
Crushed by the iron heels,

Fleck'd with the sable foam
Of Steam's swift horse! . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . .

IX.

I come
Now to the ways of Mammon,
Back to the wiles of woman,
Else to the toils are human,
Out of the leafy by-ways
Into the teeming high-ways,
Into the hectic fever
Here by the dual river.
Loud is the solitude
With strife and the din of traffic—
Loud are the ways seraphic,
Voiced with the loud invader,
Vexed with the sordid trader
Come to the land but newly—
Come to the Ultime Thule.
Ocean is joined to ocean,
Gulf to the Arctic ices
Firm with an iron fetter.
Far to earth's utter sources
Trade on his charger courses,
Bearing his ill devices:
Not in the land of Thule
Now is a happy valley,—
Now is a way of pity.

ALOES.

I have drained to its dregs the gilt chalice
of pleasure;
I have quaffed to its lees the full
flagon of life;
I have drank at the Fountain of Youth a
full measure;
In the harvest of love I have gleaned
a fair sheaf.

I have tasted the temperate fruits are
forbidden;
I have eaten the apple 'neath tropical
skies;
I have felt the keen edge of the axe that
lies hidden
In the innocent mask of a pair
of soft eyes.

I have climbed up the steep of Parnassian
mountains;
I have drank till I reeled the Cas-
talian wine;

I have loved in the crystalline Lethean
fountains;
I have dreamed the sweet dream of a
fame that was mine.

I have had the full love of the one perfect
woman;
I have felt the high thrill of a father's
first joy:
I have turned her full love to the hate of
a demon;
I have banished the love of my
passionate boy.

And at thirty I stand on the edge of the
evening,
And peer with a shudder far into
the night—
In the past but a pang, nor the present
reprieving,
In the future no gleam of a bea-
coning light.

—There is hope? What is hope but a beau-
tiful wraith?
I would give all the hope man e'er
had or may boast
For one æon of youth—I would barter the
faith
Of the cycles of time for the love I
have lost.

Nevermore!—I have lavished my day, and the
gloaming,

As it creeps o'er the heights whispers
low, and it saith,
"Art thou ready?—the Fiend of the Future is
coming,
The inscrutable Fiend, the white Uhlan
of death!"

I am ready.—What matter if dead or if
living?
There is nothing in life but its
aloes for me.
And is death not of life but a kindly de-
priving?
Then why should I fear to forget
and be free?

ALONE.

Alone!—ear hath not heard,
Tongue hath not spoken word
So fraught with perfect moan
As this sad word Alone.

Alone!—I am alone,
Apart from men, unknown:
'Mid myriads of my kind
I count no man my friend.

Alone!—men pass me by;
I ask, I question why:
'Twas thus from infancy,
Thus will it ever be.

Alone!—I have no thought
In league with human aught:
There is no beating heart
Gives me some only part.

Alone!—alone with life,
Alone with mother, wife,
With daughter and with son,
And with myself alone.

Alone!—I marvel me
If in the life To Be
I shall be so alone
As in this teeming zone.

I marvel, and I dream
Beyond the silent stream
One waits whom God hath given
To be my friend in heaven—

A sad soul floating e'er
Since time from sphere to sphere.
Me seeking, I have sought:
O satisfying thought!

BROKEN VASES.

1.

A friend gave me one day
A vase of Sevrès clay.
His name was written on—
His portrait graven 'pon
The vase, and this legend:
"A token from a friend."

My hand in anger swept
The vase I long had kept.
I culled the fragments fine
And gave them one to join—
One skilled: he joined them well
But left a scar to tell.

2.

A maid gave me one day
Her heart to keep alway.
My name was written on—
My portrait graven 'pon
The gem, and this: "'Twixt thee
And me a bond for aye."

But I with ruffian stroke
Ere long the jewel broke.
I gleaned the fragments fine
And gave them her to join:
She joined them wondrous well,
But left a scar to tell.

3.

My Marguerite, my wife,
Gave me her whole white life.
Her soul was stamped upon—
Her spirit graven on
The gift, and this: "For me
'Tis for eternity."

But I with passion rife
Dissevered her blent life.
I culled the splinters fine
And gave them her to join:
She joined them well—alas
A scar each splinter has.

A REQUIEM.

I loved, and lived a year and a day
  In my faith in my love Marie,
And my love Marie a year and a day
  Loved, living in faith in me.

But one wrought out of a coarser clay,
  And envying her and me
Our faith in our living loves, one day
  Tempted my love Marie,

Whispering, "Hollow the faith of him
  Thou deemest so true to thee;
Yestereve in the mists he came
  And pledged his faith to me,

Saying, 'Thou wast my love alway;
  Never I loved but thee;
A fancy, dead in a year and day,
  My passion for my Marie.'"

And hearing, heeding the lie of me
  She spake of the coarser clay,
The faith died out of my love Marie
  Had lived a year and a day—

Died in an instant . . . Well, ah me!
  How frail a thing is a faith!—
Soul of a spirit, dream of a joy,
  Fay of a phantom wraith!

TO M. R. H.

And thou!—I one day said,
"Her friendship true will last:"
A little year has past,
And it is dead.

How slight a thing to thee!—
A kindly word, some store
Of sympathy—no more;
'Twas much to me.

Mine is the loss—I know
Not why you passed me by;
I will not question why—
You willed it so.

A pang, an unwept tear,—
I view slain Friendship lie,
Pierced unexpectant by
Scorn's iron spear.

By memory cherished, rest,
Dream of a perished year,—
Rest in memoriam here—
Here in my breast.

. . . . . .
. . . . . .

So one by one they pass:
Each year a fetter less
Binds me to life's duress—
And yet, alas!

So one by one they fall,
Cut down—I cannot say
Wherefore, O years, ye slay
My friendships all.

TO A LADY.

On Her Wedding Day.

One dark December day
A maiden crossed my way.
The lamp burned fitfully
Within my heart, but she
Poured oil upon the flame
And gave it added gleam.

A year went by, and yet
The flame her presence lit
Burned steadily, and I
Dreamed 'twas not lit to die—
It burned so loyally
I thought 'twould burn alway.

December rounding brought
The maid (e'er nigh in thought)
Again one wintry day
Athwart my lighten'd way.

The flame leapt up anew . . .
And died—how, none e'er knew.

. . . . . .
. . . . . .

A friend told me just now
She'd taken Hymen's vow.
A pang—I smiled, and said
To me, "An she has wed
Another for this life,
Her memory is *my* wife."

TO THE SAME.

On the Birth of her First Boy.

A dreary year to many,
A cheery year to many—
To thee, Estelle?
To me—ah, well!
Some days are dreary,
Some days are cheery,
And some are chill,
And some are ill,
As the years go by:
A little more dreary,
A little less cheery,
A little more chill,
A little more ill
Each year, as the years flow by.

I hear from some fair other,
Estelle, thou art a mother—
A first-born boy,
A wife's chief joy!

A thrill—I whisper,
"The tiny lisper,
The little life,
My memory-wife,
Is ours!" And ever,
As the days go brightly
I say it lightly,
And I say it soft,
And repeat it oft,
And over, aweary never.

Bright beauty—will he know me?
Slight beauty—will he know me?
His eyes are thine;
His hair is mine,
So fine and yellow;
His laugh as mellow
As the bobolink's,
Is thine, one thinks
Who has felt its powers;
But mine his sadness,
And thine his gladness;
His lips as wine—
Ah, they are thine!—
This beautiful boy of ours.

TO H—— L—— S——.

Why do I love thee? For thy beauty. Which
Fair part of thee is fairest? When you laugh,
I say, "It is her laugh," and when you weep,
"Nay, 'tis her tears," and when your heart is touch'd
With pity of some sorrow, then I say,
"It is her heart," and when you joust with man
In tourney of the mind and vanquish him,
"Ah, 'tis her mind;" anon I view thee bathed
In some pure psychic glow of lofty thought,
And then I whisper to me, "'Tis her soul!"
I know not which is fairest—can I guess
Of twenty opals which alone is first,
If none be second? Thou art fair as light
(Tho' men proclaim thee plain) in *all* to me—
Within, without alway; but if one part
Be fairer than another, 'tis, I think,
Thy spirit's lattice, thy divine plain face.
The crowning thought of God was mortal woman:
Thou art His better after-thought of her.

FOR WHO SHALL SAY?

. . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . .

For who shall say those subtle essences
Give man his prowess o'er the lesser beasts,
Were not before man was? Was Dante's soul
A thing of Dante's years? Was Byron's spirit,
With all its stores of knowledge at an age
When little men are infants—with its vast
And varied intimacies with all things,
Coeval with that part of him which died?
Think ye the marvellous boy, whose genius 'mazed
The savans of a nation, prison'd a soul
Too in its teens? Was mortal Keats, who fell
At four and twenty, pierced with Malice's dart—
Who life achieving lived to death so young—
The bridewell of a spirit no more old?
Was mighty Cæsar's soul but fifty-six?
I think it had lived ages ere Rome was.
I think the finished spirits of this earth—
Rare, enviable and immortal few—

Were fashioned in the glow of God's full youth,
When He intoxicate with new creation
Wrought some essence of Himself in each:
For they are gods of men . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . .

AMBITION.

Sempoalla—night. A room in the Palace of the Cacique; Hernando Cortès within.

CORTÈS [*solus*].

Now doth my purpose ripen to rare fruit.
I've played a game at hazards with the jade
Men christen Fortune, and have paired her oft,
Till odds are in my favor. Velasquez,
Thou fortune-fashioned pawn, I've taken thee.
When all hung on the hazard of a move,
I played it cautiously, nor risked a chance;
But since I've centered all upon the king,
I'll play it boldly, for a desperate game
Will brook no caution, and whoso doth win
Doth silence cavil at the manner of 't.
There's virtue in success and vice in failure.
Rebellion when achieved is revolution,
And any patriot laurel-crown'd and loved
Had losing been an upstart and a traitor:
There's but a narrow chance 'twixt faith and treason.
Gold is the key shall open wide the door

'Twixt me and Carlos' favor, and the Pope
I'll win with piety and proselytes:
With Rome to ægis me, who dare impeach,
Tho' twenty treasons lurked in my adventure!

[*Rising, he paces the floor feverishly. Alvarado enters to announce the arrival of an embassy from Montezuma. Alvarado, naming the rich presents sent by the Aztec emperor to Cortès, mentions twenty noble virgins—one the emperor's own daughter; whereupon their conversation takes an amorous bent, and they recount their amours, Alvarado's passing in number and boldness those of Cortès. At last Cortès exclaims in extenuation and self-defense—*

Ah, well, well,
Opportunity was something niggard with me.

ALVARADO.

'Tis opportunity doth shape all fames:
The clown who dangled at a harrow's tail,
And died the clod he coaxed base being from,
Had haply been great Cæsar, circumstanced
Like Cæsar, and th' imperial One a clod
Of man-guised earth, but for supreme occasion.

[*Exit Alvarado.*

CORTÈS [*solus*].

'Tis opportunity doth shape all fames'!
Ah, Alvarado, in thine airy speech
Thou utter'dst all unwitting weighty truth.
Now is the handle of supreme occasion
Thrust out by Fate, beseeching I shall grasp it,
Nor sues in vain, for I'll lay hold of it
With the firm and constant grip of stout Ambition.
Cortès, thou dangler at the strings of Fortune,
Thou clod hast coaxed base being from existence,
Thou 'rt franchised by large opportunity.
Now shalt thou climb to fame's high eminence—
Hew'ng rundles with thy sword—and carve thy name
Level with the immortal minority—
Or die a surer death with headlong pitch
Down in the abysm of the unremember'd.
O tantalizing thought!—to die unborne
I' the memories of the men come after me.
Man—what is he but a name? a sign
Of something sensate, tangible, instinct?
And if he die uncrowned, and bear his name
Down into the dank, worm-peopled, noisome grave,
For what fit purpose hath he lived his life?
Far better have been a patient plodding beast,
Content with housing from the winter's blast
And feed to appease keen hunger's gnawing.

[*A pause.*

O
Thou patient little soul, live out thy space,
And dying mingle thy juices with the earth's,
And men shall turn the whites o' their eyes to heaven,
And sigh, Ah me! and whisper, He did his duty:

Another 'll glide into thy place and fill it
As thou hadst never been, O mighty mote!
Living, you fatted 'pon the rankness of the soil;
Dead, you shall nourish fodder for men else,
And fat a cabbage with your festering carcass.
Bah! what an end of all man's aspirations!
What price too dear for full absolvement from it?
I'd barter hope, and peace, and conjugal love,
And all the lesser deities men worship,
To compass it—Ay, I would pledge my soul,
My absolving faith from sin, and all save honor,
And leap down in the abyss o' the dread hereafter,
Godless, Christless, to win a deathless name.
Having it, what need I of a god? I'd be
A god myself, apotheosized of men.—
But peace! possess thyself, O mine ambition,
Against th' achievement of thy victory.

[*Exit.*

ADIOS.

I.

Once I thought 'twould me dissever
From myself to sever us.
Once I deemed your life could never
Bear dissev'rance, dare my loss.
By how frail a thread is friendship
Joined to beating human hearts!
Touched, it snaps, and dead is friendship,
Broken in many-anguished parts.
Thou and I were friends, and boasted
We should be so evermore:
Lo! a touch I thought had tested
But not taxed our friendship o'er—
Thou, whose heart here on mine rested,
Shall rest hereon nevermore—
Thou didst view the hand uplifted,
Thou didst view it swift descend,
Nor thine own free hand uplifted
To withhold it, or forefend.

II.

Well, 'tis ended: we unblended
Who so solely deemed us blent,
Hence are strangers, I unfriended,
Thou to other friendships lent—
For thou canst not *give* thee to them,
But, possessing, must renew them.
Adios.— I love thee, view thee
As a dead far more than wife,
And thy memory mingles newly
With my new unfriended life.
Groping down the years, I builded
Phantom-friendships by the way:
Night o'er-palled them—morning gilded
Splendid wrecks of yesterday.
Deep then in the vale of manhood—
All my youth's fair friendships dead—
Thine I built, where never man should
Enter, or despoil, I said.
Lo! the sun went down—I slumbered
In this frendship aye of mine:
Lo! the sun came up—it numbered
With the slain thine, even thine.

III.

Lo! the reed growing by the river
Plucked out leaveth scarce a trace;
But the oak uprooted, never
Time the void can quite efface.
Youth may love to-day, to-morrow
View its frail love borne afar,
Leaving a little hour's sorrow,
Leaving ne'er a sign or scar.
Man may love—his love is ever,
Rooting deep down round his soul;

Stricken, it leaves a chasm never
Surgery of the years can heal.
Adios.—I kiss thy memory
Now at eventide and morn,
As of yore I kissed the, Marie,
Ere from mine thy life was torn.
Adios.—The hurt abides on
In the silence of my heart
Better and less grievous is than
Never to have known thou wert.

ERRATA.

On page 24. In line 10, omit comma after "to."
On page 39. In line 15, for "James," read Janus.
On page 40. In line 5, for "imquiet," read unquiet.
On page 61. In line 11, for "Cardicide," read Cordicide.
On page 66. In line 5, for "seems," read sums.
On page 68. In line 12, for "gone," read zone.
On page 71. In line 2, for "idolence," read indolence.
On page 76. In line 1, for "loved," read laved.
On page 99. In line 5, for "the," read thee.

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